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SUBJECT: SECURITY AT THE JORDAN-IRAQ BORDER

REF: AMMAN 297

Classified By: CDA David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Attacks inside Iraq near the Iraqi/Jordanian border crossing in recent months have focused GOJ attention on security on the Jordanian side of the border. Some security measures have contributed to delays for commercial and humanitarian traffic headed into Iraq. NGO officials have also expressed concern for refugees camped at the crossing. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) According to border liaison personnel of the U.S. Army's Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) attached to Embassy Amman, insurgents have set off small explosive devices and fired on U.S. forces near Checkpoint 129, approximately 20 kilometers inside of Iraq, each month since April around the monthly rotations of Iraqi border staff at the Karamah/Treibil crossing on the Jordanian/Iraqi frontier. A July 24 attack took place unusually close to the Jordanian border facilities, which were last targeted by a suicide bomber in December (reftel). U.S. military contacts tell us the Iraqi border authorities, compound (housed in former hotels) was attacked July 24 by a single vehicle. As the car approached the entrance of the compound from the east, the attacker set off his suicide bomb, injuring three Iraqi border officers (one seriously) and causing minor structural damage. Subsequent delays and closures slowed border operations on both sides. Since then Jordanians have been enforcing stricter security measures including thorough searches of all vehicles, trucks, and persons attempting to enter Jordan.

¶3. (C) The bombing also affected Iranian Kurdish refugees who have been seeking entry into Jordan at this crossing since January (reftel). On July 25, Jordanian Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm reported "approximately 200 Kurdish refugees living in the buffer zone on the Jordanian-Iraqi border rushed to the Jordanian gate upon hearing the sound of the explosion asking for security protection." While UNHCR's Ruyashid Field Office confirmed that there were no casualties among the refugees, this attack could compound the movement restrictions that Jordan's Ministry of Interior has started to impose on the Jordanian Hashemite Charitable Organizations (JHCO), which recently signed a two-month service agreement to supply limited aid to these refugees pending the relocation to northern Iraq of the Al Tash camp near Ramadi. (NOTE: Jordan's Interior Ministry hopes to avoid re-establishing refugee camps at the border since the GOJ agreed this spring to transfer the population of the UNHCR "No Man's Land" Camp at the Karama/Treibil crossing to another UNHCR camp in Ruyashid, 70 kilometers inside the border. The GOJ continues to deny entry to new asylum seekers from Iraq. END NOTE.)

¶4. (C) To further bolster border security, Jordan began implementing a zero tolerance policy on July 26 toward vehicles suspected of fuel smuggling. The GOJ's intent is to turn back smuggling vehicles that make it through the Iraqi side of the border crossing so as to prevent their entry into Jordan.

HALE